

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-7 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended, claim 2 is canceled and claim 7 is added. Support for the amendment to claim 1 can be found, for example, in original claim 2. Support for new claim 7 can be found, for example, in the instant specification at paragraphs [0082]-[0088]. No new matter is added. In view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claim 2 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but is otherwise allowable.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102

The Office Action rejects claims 1 and 3-6 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 6,047,544 to Yamamoto et al. ("Yamamoto"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Although Applicants do not necessarily agree with the rejection, in the interest of advancing prosecution claim 1 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of allowable claim 2. Accordingly, the rejection is overcome and should be withdrawn. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

New Claim

By this Amendment, new claim 7 is added. New claim 7 distinguishes over the prior art of record at least because it recites "[a] catalyst for purifying exhaust gases, comprising: a catalyst support having tubular passages through which exhaust gases flow in an axial direction; a coating layer formed on a surface of the catalyst support, the coating layer being composed of a zeolite, a refractory inorganic oxide, and a first catalyst metal loaded on a surface of the refractory inorganic oxide; and a second catalyst metal loaded on at least one of a front stage part of the coating layer at an upstream end of the exhaust gas flow and a rear stage part of the coating layer at a downstream end of the exhaust gas flow, wherein the

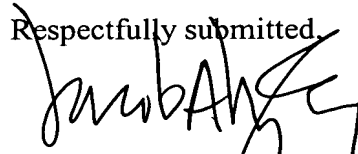
coating layer is formed so that that the zeolite and the refractory inorganic oxide on which the first catalyst metal is loaded are mixed" (emphasis added). Accordingly, new claim 7 is allowable.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-6 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


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